

Services March 2022			
2 <sup>nd</sup> March Ash Wednesday	9.30 Cuxton Holy Communion 11.00 Halling Holy Communion	Joel 2 vv 12-17 p912 Matthew 6 vv 16-21 p970	
6 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 1	9.30 Cuxton Holy Communion 11.00 Halling Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 26 vv 1-11 p203 Romans 10 vv 5-13 p1137 Luke 4 vv 1-13 p1030	
13 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 2	9.30 Cuxton Holy Communion 11.00 Halling Holy Communion	Genesis 15 vv 1-18 p15 Philippians 3 v17 – 4 v1 p1180 Luke 13 vv 31-35 p1047	
20 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 3	9.30 Cuxton Holy Communion 11.00 Halling Holy Communion	Isaiah 55 vv 1-13 p742 I Corinthians 10 vv 1-13 p1151 Luke 13 vv 1-9 p1046	
27 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	9.30 Cuxton Holy Communion 11.00 Halling Holy Communion	II Corinthians 5 vv 11-21 p1161 Luke 15 vv 1-32 p1048	
Holy Communion Cuxton Wednesdays 9.30		Holy Communion Halling Thursdays 9.30	
2 <sup>nd</sup> March Ash Wednesday	Joel 2 vv 12-17 Matthew 6 vv 16 - 21	3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Jeremiah 10 vv 1-16 John 6 vv 1-15
9 <sup>th</sup> March Ember Day	Jeremiah 15 vv 10-21 John 6 vv 60-71	10 <sup>th</sup> March	Jeremiah 17 vv 5-18 John 7 vv 1-13
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Jeremiah 20 vv 7-18 John 8 vv 12-20	17 <sup>th</sup> March S Patrick	Jeremiah 21 vv 1-10 John 8 vv 21-30
23 <sup>rd</sup> March	Jeremiah 24 vv 1-10 John 9 vv 24-41	24 <sup>th</sup> March	Jeremiah 25 vv 1-14 John 10 vv 1-10
30 <sup>th</sup> March	Jeremiah 30 vv 1-11 John 11 vv 28-37	31 <sup>st</sup> March	Jeremiah 30 vv 12-22 John 11 vv 38-44
6 <sup>th</sup> April	Jeremiah 33 vv 1-13 John 13 vv 1-11	7 <sup>th</sup> April	Jeremiah 33 vv 14-26 John 13 vv 12-20

Copy Date April Magazine: 11<sup>th</sup> March 8.30 am Rectory

We're getting back to normal. We'll carry on (God willing) with our Holy Communion services at Cuxton at 9.30 on Sundays and Wednesdays and at Halling at 11.00 on Sundays & 9.30 on Thursdays. Don't forget, even if you cannot come to Church at this time, many of our services are on YouTube

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt19Ky3DY43cyO\\_AJ8e-6\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt19Ky3DY43cyO_AJ8e-6_w) There are also plenty of resources on the Church of England web page. I can also bring you Holy Communion at home if you ask me. We'll hold XKids when we can arrange it for children at St John's. (See Spring Celebration p9). Saints Alive / Sunday School meets at Cuxton at 9.30 in term time except on the first Sunday in the month. Join the adult congregation for the beginning of the service and a children's talk then move down into the church hall for the Sunday School part.

Masks are no longer a legal requirement and we're expected to use our own common sense about COVID. Social distancing and sanitising are still a good idea. Of course, you can still wear a mask if you wish. Don't feel pressurised into relaxing precautions if you don't feel it is safe to do so. Don't be reckless with other people's safety. Keep in touch. Take care of one another. Ask me if there is anything I can do for you, including prayer requests. I'll continue to say Morning Prayer at home and Evening Prayer at St Michael's at 5.00pm except on Mondays. I also continue to say the Litany on Sundays, Wednesdays & Fridays, and the ante-Communion on days when there should be a Communion service but there isn't. Except for Mondays, St Michael's is open during the day time (from morning dog run till Evensong). The church hall is now open for church events and for hire by organisations and individuals for talks, training, classes, etc. as long as they observe COVID precautions and leave the premises clean and tidy. We're not yet ready to hire out the hall for private parties. We intend to establish a hall committee before we do so in order to consider all the issues which need to be settled before we can do so.

Please contact me for weddings, christenings, anointing, home Communion, etc.. More information is available on my web page <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org>

St John's Draw January: £5 each: 15 Master Burman, 73 Miss Mitchell & 86 Mrs Booth  
St Michael's Draw (February): 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> prize Malcolm Curnow, 3<sup>rd</sup> prize Trudy Fenton-Scott.



Struggling to print last month's magazine and wondering whether I would have enough copies and of a good enough quality reminded me of something which happened nearly 50 years ago. London's outer ring used not to be the M25, but the much more environment friendly and socially more acceptable green country bus division of London Transport. With the coming of the National Bus Company, this was separated off from London Transport and became London Country Buses. Something went wrong about the allocation of vehicles and London Country did not have enough buses to maintain its services. They had to hire vehicles from other operators which is the reason why these Maidstone Corporation double deckers are at Dartford Bus Garage, the foremost waiting to go to Sevenoaks. London Country put notices on its bus stops asking people to be patient if their bus didn't arrive at all or if it was a smaller vehicle than usual and couldn't accommodate the queue. Prospective passengers were asked not to take it out on drivers and conductors who were trying to do their best. I thought my apology regarding the magazine sounded somewhat similar!



### The Litany

It was King Henry VIII who, for reasons which are deceptively well known, definitively decided that the head of

the English Church should not be the Bishop of Rome, but the King of England. Actually, Christ is the Head of the Church, but He does entrust her governance to human beings who ought to be very conscious of their tremendous responsibility. *Take heed therefore, says S Paul to church leaders, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

Henry had what he considered to be good reasons for the rupture with Rome, but, at heart, he remained a mediaeval catholic. He did not see much need for the reformation of the Church which had been set in train on the continent by the preaching of Martin Luther. It was men like Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, who took advantage of the situation and persuaded a somewhat reluctant Henry to introduce some of the changes which were so obviously necessary – in particular the Bible and Prayer Book in English and a renewed emphasis on the fact that we are saved solely by God's grace to which we have unfettered access through faith in Jesus Christ

Who is the only mediator and advocate with God Whom any of us needs to approach the Throne of Grace.

The first service to be made available for public use in English was the Litany. It was originally intended to be used in procession, but is more usually said or sung these days in a church or cathedral or by someone praying alone at home or just with his family or a few friends. With a few small changes, Cranmer's Litany is the one found after Morning and Evening Prayer (and the Quicunque Vult) in our Book of Common Prayer. It is appointed to be said on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays after Morning Prayer and *at other times when it shall be commanded by the Ordinary* (usually the Bishop). There are also litanies in Common Worship, though there are no fixed times when they are to be used. It is perhaps a shame that we don't use the Litany more often in church. There is so much good stuff in it! I thought I'd share some nuggets and what they mean to me.

*O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God : have mercy upon us miserable sinners.* We begin with Who God is and how we stand in relation to Him. God is infinite power and wisdom. God is holy. God is love. God is the originator and sustainer of all that is in heaven and on earth. God is beyond our words, infinitely greater than anything we can understand. Weak, foolish, unclean, unloving, lacking in comprehension, we are helpless sinners, divided from the Source and End of our being by our sheer inadequacy. And yet, God loves us. He

hears our prayers. He forgives our sins. He washes us clean. He sanctifies us. In Jesus Christ, God bestows upon us His wisdom and power. All that is required of us is that we put our faith in Him and repent of our sins. He will have mercy on us miserable sinners.

That first one was the hardest petition to understand. It's plainer sailing from here on in. *From all blindness of heart; from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, Good Lord, deliver us.* Surely we want to be good people, to live good lives. We depend utterly on the grace of God in order to live the Christian life. So we ask for His help so that we can become more like Jesus, our Teacher and our example. He hears our prayers and we open ourselves by His grace to His grace.

*From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, Good Lord, deliver us.* I don't think I need to say why we should make this prayer, the world being as it is today.

*By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation; by thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us.* It's because Jesus has lived on earth and done all these things that He fully understands what our lives are like, that He is with us on life's journey, that He receives our prayers and answers them, that He consecrates our hours and our days and at last welcomes us into Heaven.

*In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, Good Lord, deliver us.* We always need Jesus in good times and in bad throughout our lives and at their end.

*We sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God; and that it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church universal in the right way; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* In these troubled and perplexing times, I very much feel the need for this prayer, including for our own

Church of England. But not in a self-righteous way. It's God's Church & I am part of it, one of the sinners, along with the Archbishop of Canterbury and you, whoever you are, reading this meditation.

*That it may please thee to rule her heart in thy faith, fear, and love, and that she may evermore have affiance in thee, and ever seek thy honour and glory; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* That's the Queen. She needs our prayers both for her personal life and for her service in her public roles in Church and state, in this country and overseas. I like that clause *that she may evermore have affiance in thee.*

*That it may please thee to bless and preserve,, Charles, Prince of Wales, and all the Royal Family; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* There are quite a few reasons to pray for the Royal Family. As we do so, we may also remember the strains in our own families and those of other people.

*That it may please thee to illuminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of thy Word; and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth, and show it accordingly; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Well that's what we're here for and we need your prayers. I stress that that's what we're here for. We're not parish managers or parish politicians.

*That it may please thee to bless and keep the Magistrates, giving them grace to execute justice, and to maintain truth; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Pray for all those involved in the administration of justice, for protection from crime, for the reformation of offenders, for just laws, for their proper application. There might be cases you know about personally or in the day's papers which you think about when you say this prayer.

*That it may please thee to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* There will be plenty in the day's papers to bear in mind when saying this prayer.

*That it may please thee to give us an heart to love and dread thee, and diligently to live after thy*

*commandments; That it may please thee to give to all thy people increase of grace to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” “Perfect love casteth out fear.” There is a tension in our relationship with God but it is that relationship which makes us the people we are becoming and which makes us useful in the world.

*That it may please thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred, and are deceived; That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand; and to comfort and help the weak-hearted; and to raise up those who fall; and finally to beat down Satan under our feet; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* We pray for others in their Christian pilgrimage. Maybe, there are people we can think of who need us to pray these prayers for them, not arrogantly or self-righteously, but as fellow pilgrims equally, totally dependent on Jesus.

*That it may please thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless children, and widows, and all who are desolate and oppressed; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* We pray for people in need of whatever kind. When we do so, God might use us to answer our prayers, by showing kindness to neighbours, by subscribing to the foodbank, by working for or giving money to missions & charities, for example.

*That it may please thee to have mercy upon all men; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Our prayers are fully comprehensive. Nobody is left out of the love of God. Nobody, therefore, ought to be outside the circle of our love. We should

hate no-one. We should not be indifferent or selfish where we could relieve human need.

*That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* This is what Jesus prayed when they nailed Him to the Cross. It is the characteristic prayer of Christian people, but it's not always easy to say & mean.

*That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so that in due time we may enjoy them; We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* We really shouldn't forget where our food comes from, to be thankful, to be generous and to be good stewards of God's creation.

*A Prayer of St. Chrysostom.*

**ALMIGHTY** God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

All my dogs twigged that saying the Grace meant that the service was ending. Since I've been using the 1662 book for Morning & Evening Prayer and the Litany, Tommy seems to have worked out that the Prayer of St Chrysostom is the penultimate prayer. It's a good prayer. Think about it. It explains why God doesn't always answer our prayers in the way in which we think He should and it asks for all we really need for this life and the next. Roger.

P.S.: I was once in Manchester for the Science and Religion Forum conference. On the last day, I was asked to preside at the service of Holy Communion in the parish Church. It is one of the few churches in this country dedicated to S Chrysostom and it was actually S Chrysostom's Day. So I was quite excited and felt very privileged to be able to do this. Unhappily, although it was a Church of England Church, they used the Roman Catholic form of service and I had a great deal of trouble finding my way through the missal or prayerbook. So it proved to be quite embarrassing and I found myself quite out of my depth.

On the way home, I called in at Oscott College to meet a Roman Catholic friend who is now a Roman Catholic bishop and has visited us here. He showed me their splendid Victorian chapel with its statues of highly respected nineteenth century cardinals. I noticed that several of them had started out as Anglicans (Newman, Wiseman, Manning). Food for thought? We are, after all, all one in the Lord.

### Some Thoughts on the Proposed Winery in Bush Valley

In the last edition of the Parish Magazine, Roger told us about the sad and largely unnecessary church closures that the Church of England has made in the recent past.

My tale is an equally sad forewarning of another loss that may affect all of us in the Parish of Cuxton and Halling as a result of the building of the “Kentish Wine Vault” on Burrow Hill in Upper Bush. Many of you will know the area I am writing about. The valley that lies to the southwest of the beautiful and peaceful hamlet of Upper Bush consists (or, rather, used to consist) of about 320 acres of good Kentish arable farmland. It has been farmed for hundreds of years and indeed, the fields and associated surrounding woodlands have remained largely unchanged since a map of the church tithe boundaries was made in 1839.

In early summer, just until a couple of years ago, one could stand at the southern end of Bush Valley and look out across a scene of breathtaking beauty. In the distance Rochester Castle and the cathedral could be seen, with the white band of the Medway motorway bridge stretching across the river in front of them. In Bush Valley below, a great, green ocean of growing wheat or barley undulated in the gentle breeze that always blew there, even on the hottest days. The reds of the poppies, the yellows of the various mustards and hawkweeds and the blues of the chicory and borage punctuated the green fields with splashes of rainbow colour. A few timorous deer sometimes ventured out from their woodland hideaways to forage among the crops. Innumerable butterflies flew along the pathways. Above, the larks sang and the swifts, swallows and house martins chased each other across the sky. And as evening drew in, the Noctule bats skittered out from Red Wood and the pale shape of the occasional Barn Owl skimmed over the fields, hunting for shrews and field mice. The peace and serenity of the place was good for the soul. Nature seemed to co-exist quite happily with the farming practices of the valleys.

Now, much of this timeless beauty has been lost to the dull, dreary monoculture of the vineyard. The same transformation has happened over the hill in Luddesdown as well. The ever-changing arable fields have been deep-ploughed, dragging the underlying chalk to the surface in white, sterile swathes. No more will wildflowers bloom in the profusion they once did. With the wildflowers gone, the insects and butterflies have also largely departed and along with them, the swallows and swifts. The wind-blown waves of wheat and barley have gone, possibly forever. The fields are now covered in ugly posts and steel wires to support the struggling new grape vines, making the valley look like a giant radio aerial and effectively wrapping the land in a wire cage. The larks, unable to fly across the fields because of the wires and the absence of cover, have left. Once alive with lark-song, the valley seemed silent and dead this summer. Even the trees in Red Wood have been brutally coppiced, driving away the bats.

To add insult to this already substantial injury, the vineyard owners now wish to build a £30 million restaurant, wine bar, café and visitor’s centre complex on the top of Barrow Hill, overlooking the ancient cottages of Upper Bush. It will be nearly the size of two football pitches and fronted by an ornamental lake. Those of you of a certain age may remember the “Thunderbirds” TV programme: the winery building looks somewhat like Tracy Island, complete with pool. Underneath, approximately 120,000 cubic metres of chalk will be excavated to incorporate a wine production and bottling plant, aimed at producing a mind-boggling fifteen million bottles a year. The chalk spoil from this, if spread around Bush Valley to a depth of three feet, would cover 40 acres.

Current national planning guidelines pretty much presume against the building of new structures such as this in Green Belt land or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, both classifications possessed by Bush Valley.

The wealthy owner of the vineyard company is not to be denied, however. Agricultural buildings are exempt from the presumption against new buildings in green belt land but, just to help things along, Medway Council’s Planning department have decided that a £30 million restaurant, wine bar, café and visitor’s centre complex is merely just another agricultural building, like a barn or a cowshed! That disingenuous decision must have been ratified by someone senior in central government in order for Medway Council’s planners to

be confident that they can get away with it. The wider ramifications of this decision for green belt land everywhere in the UK are obvious.

So, just like Roger observed last month, we can see: “...*what can happen when powerful people make decisions that affect other people’s lives, they themselves having little accountability. We can see for ourselves the effects of their decisions even if we don’t know why they made them or on what logic, or on what evidence...*”

This isn’t the place to debate the merits or otherwise of the proposed winery development here, though I feel it is acceptable to share my sense of loss with you and to draw a parallel with the church closures that Roger referred to last month.

Indeed, some people in the parish are passionately in favour of the Kentish Wine Vault. Perhaps they feel that the loss of Bush Valley to the vineyard arrivistes is a small price to pay in exchange for cheap fizzy wine, a few local jobs and maybe a nice place to go for a meal. Others don’t share that opinion, however, so please don’t sneer at them (not that any readers *here* would, of course!) just because they don’t agree with you. Surely, the biggest loss to the people of Cuxton and Halling Parish would be the loss of the ability to hold friendly discussions or to have amicable disagreement about local developments.

In early March, Medway’s Planning Committee will meet to decide whether or not to approve the winery building, which would hammer the final nail into Bush Valley’s ecological coffin. I have no doubt that they are people of diligence, conscience and vision.

To conclude this short essay, it seems fitting to quote our celebrated local historian, the late Derek Church. Ironically, he had Upper Bush in mind when he wrote; “*I cannot begin to imagine what goes through the minds of councillors who can destroy such a place of beauty...*” Cuxton – A Kentish Village (1976), p. 80.

Keith Hodges, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2022.

There seems to be an impression in the village that our elected councillors favour preserving the valley and protecting the village from the extra traffic, pollution and congestion the development would bring, but that the officers are supporting the developer. That latter ought not to be the case and I hope that it is not. Council officers are meant to give impartial advice to councillors. Councillors are supposed to make the decisions, which officers are then mandated to carry out. I worry, however. When Medway Council controversially imposed a woodland tree preservation order on the Rectory grounds (in the face of considerable public opposition), the council’s decision was published in the local newspaper the day before the meeting at which it was allegedly taken – complete with a verbatim quotation from officers’ advice to councillors which contained an important statement that was in fact untrue. I won’t relate the whole story of the Rectory TPO again here, but, just to say, I was not surprised by the recent revelations regarding Downing Street parties – important people behaving as though they were above the law, cover ups and insincere apologies. I have been on the receiving end of all that!

On the subject of whether it is necessary to close parish churches and remove clergy from the parishes for financial reasons, Professor Robin Gill introduces an article by Professor Ann Loades in last November’s *Theology* thus. “Professor Ann Loades argues that consecrating more(expensive) bishops within the Church of England ‘looks like yet another wrong recipe to arrest the decline’. Just on that last point, in 1851 there were over five million Anglican attendances on a Sunday when there were just 26 bishops. Today, with 120 stipendiary bishops (and even more non-parochial archdeacons), average Sunday attendances have dropped to well under one million. Diverting funds from parishes to pay for non-parochial, stipendiary senior clergy might even be a recipe for further decline. On the 1851 scale, the Church of England would have only five stipendiary bishops today! Reminiscent, perhaps, of Northcote Parkinson’s comic observation in the 1950s that the number of admirals in the navy increased in inverse proportion to the number of ships. Starting with the episcopate, any chance of some serious reformation in the Church of England?” Roger.

## From the Registers

Wedding:

15<sup>th</sup> January

Lee Daniel Fennell & Ashton Samantha Baylis

Cuxton

### Plague Yesterday & Today

I've been reading a book (*The Political Bible in Early Modern England* by Kevin Killean) about the seventeenth century in which there is a short section devoted to what people thought then about the plague. Of course, they were very different times and people looked at things differently, but I was surprised at how much we and they have in common in both what people said and what they did. Thankfully, COVID is less serious than bubonic plague and science and medicine have advanced considerably over the last four centuries so that: we know better how to reduce the spread of infectious diseases by better hygiene and the use of quarantine; we have measures such as vaccination which help to protect us; we have better medical care to look after us if we succumb. We also have a more prosperous, mechanised and computerised society which has enabled us to make isolation both more practical and more bearable.

One doctor in 1625 said that he had no idea how to treat the plague and his reputation would only suffer if he tried and failed to cure people. So he'd flee the city and sit it out and he advised other professional people to do the same. He warned them not to dally or they'd catch the plague and take it with them into the country. Thankfully, our NHS workers weren't at all like that man. They remained at their posts, working hard and long hours, often without proper protective personal protective equipment.

In the seventeenth century, there were plenty of people who were harshly critical of professional people, including the clergy, who shut themselves away or left the city, instead of caring for the people who depended on them. City dwellers who took up residence in the country were not always welcome. They might be infectious already. They might hog the resources which country people themselves needed such as food, shelter, medical care. There was also criticism in those distant days of powerful people made the rules but didn't keep the rules themselves.

In our time of plague, too, large numbers of people in the position to do so headed for the countryside where there were fears that they would spread the disease and overwhelm rural food supplies and medical services. Some people were angry at the way churches were closed and clergy ordered to stay away from their parishioners while others thought this was a sensible precaution. There was some feeling that, as the COVID situation improved slightly, GPs were too slow to go back to face to face consultations and that schools and universities should have returned sooner to the classroom and the lecture theatre rather than continuing to teach online. Again, others saw this reluctance to go back to normal too soon as a wise precaution.

There was widespread criticism of the authorities back in the seventeenth century because they were not prepared for the plague when it struck. Similarly, we had been warned for at least a century that one day there would be another global pandemic, but COVID still caught us largely unprepared.

There was concern in the seventeenth century for prisoners who were abandoned locked up when their gaolers left them to it. Closed communities like prisons and care homes suffered particular problems in our own time of pandemic, but, although there have been problems with staff shortages, we have not by and large abandoned these vulnerable people – though this did happen in some European countries.

Back in those days, much was made of the patience of the biblical King Hezekiah when he was smitten with a serious illness (from which, following prayer, he recovered). (See Isaiah 38, though I personally don't see Hezekiah as someone who calmly and patiently accepted his serious illness and probably approaching death. He wept and pleaded with God for an extension and God gave him another 15 years.) I think there was also a great deal of sympathy for our prime minister when he himself caught COVID, nearly died of it, and then



returned to work as soon as he could (though, as with me and Hezekiah, there are differences of opinion about BJ).

There was concern that, where people had fled their homes or where a whole household had died, empty houses were being robbed by people who either didn't care about the risk of entering a plague house or were so desperately poor that they took the chance anyway. I don't think I've heard of that happening this time.

There was disruption of essential supplies because movement between city and country was limited both by fear and regulation. We experienced something of that, but, in our more prosperous, better run period of history, I don't think that many of us actually ran out altogether of the things we really required. People were very good about seeing that their frail neighbours were getting what they needed and many shop workers, drivers, etc., put in long hours, sometimes at risk to themselves, in order to ensure that necessities reached the shelves.

As in our time, the poor suffered worse than the rich. They were more likely to live in overcrowded areas and to be already malnourished. They were less likely to have access to such medical assistance as was available. They were more likely to have to carry on working because they would have had no savings to fall back on or servants to look after them and certainly no second homes in the countryside to flee to.

Plague and poverty went together and it was realised at least by some people that the behaviour of the rich and the way society was organised was a major cause of the desperate plight of the poor. William Woodwall, writing in 1621: *Here's a man over-rented. Try whether thou canst not ease him; there's a man wants corne for his land, stock for his stuffe, help him; there's a third that hath will and skill to trade, but he wants credite; there's a fourth that could live with a little helpe, else he and his estate sinke, O come quickly before the man be drowned with all his family.* Doesn't this sound like what we're enjoined to do now and what, to a certain extent, we are doing? Be patient with those who can't pay their rent on their homes or businesses because they haven't been able to work. Help people who could reopen their businesses and support themselves again if they could only be helped to restock after these years when their trade has been taken away from them by COVID precautions. Lend a helping hand to get people back into work after these months in which they may have been made redundant.

Obviously, it's not the same. COVID isn't the Black Death or bubonic plague. Even if it were, we are better placed to deal with sickness and disease than our ancestors were. We have learned something over the centuries. I was struck, however, by how much has not changed. Human nature remains the same and the challenge is to show wisdom in using the resources we have to deal with the problems each generation faces.

#### A Child's Perspective on the Lord's Prayer

Hello Daddy!	And please do it down here, too.	away and hiding from you.
We want to know you.	Please give us everything we	Keep us safe from our enemies.
And be close to you.	need today.	You're strong, God.
Please show us how.	Forgive us for doing wrong, for	You can do whatever you want.
Make everything in the world	hurting you.	You are in charge.
right again. And in our hearts,	Forgive us just as we forgive	Now and forever and for always!
too.	other people when they hurt us.	We think you're great!
Do what is best— just like you do	Rescue us! We need you.	Amen!
in heaven,	We don't want to keep running	

#### Winery Protest

It appears that, while maybe a couple of hundred Cuxton residents were standing in the cold and damp on 15<sup>th</sup> January to present their case to Medway Planning Committee, the councillors themselves travelled to Bush Valley via Cobham. Perhaps their SatNav was on the blink. I'm told, however, that they came back through the village (after we'd all gone home) but got stuck in a traffic jam trying to get out of Bush Road onto the A228 until one of them got out of his car and pressed the button on the pedestrian crossing.



IN  
 AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE  
 OF  
 JAMES HYDE  
 LATE STATION MASTER OF  
 CUXTON  
 WHO DIED JANUARY 28<sup>th</sup> 1870  
 AGED 49 YEARS  
 "In the Hour of Death and in the  
 Day of Judgement,  
 Good Lord Deliver Us"

A neighbour was interested in the graves of stationmasters in Cuxton Churchyard of which there are three. Mr Hyde's stone is lying on the ground near the yew tree, broken, somewhat overgrown and decayed. So the inscription is very difficult to make out. However, Mr D. E. Williams some time ago compiled a record of all the inscriptions in Cuxton Churchyard which he could make out and I found this one in his list. If anyone else is trying to read hard to decipher stones, if you ask me, I might be able to help you.

#### Percy Pigeon's Perceptions

Good day to you all. Time flies faster than a squab race. We are safely ensconced in our winter quarters, venturing out to search for the food you may have left us. Thursday mornings remain bumper foraging times with your rubbish bags torn by foxes. They remove protein and we peck at the carbohydrates. Why you put your bags out on Wednesday nights remains a mystery to us ....but we are grateful. After all the rich pickings of your festive season it was almost a relief to return to crusts, crisps and naan bread. Foxes who complained about a surfeit of turkey now make do with fish & chips, chicken

biriyani and sweet & sour sauce. We have found several bird-feeding stations locally, for which we thank you. It is good to have seeds and corn and fresh water and we try to eat these quickly so you won't be plagued by pesky rodents, although there are a lot of these critters around. Less selective, they will happily gnaw at paper and cardboard, and scrape out tins and jars.

Parts of Halling and Cuxton are looking more colourful now with the bright bulbs you have planted, if the pesky squirrels haven't dug them up. They give a welcome splash of colour to otherwise rather drab and dreary scenes. My mate Philippa particularly enjoys carefully tended gardens and observes that those are often ones with well laden bird tables. Of course hanging bird feeders are no use to us - we need a flat surface. Some flat roofs are excellent for this As I write, no decision has been made on the proposed winery. We avians really hope it does not happen. All those hundreds of lorries thundering along Bush Road would also be detrimental to our health and welfare too. We heard someone say it should be at Paddlesworth. I've never been there but my cousin Peter says there are no trees there. We have to wait and see, hoping that common sense prevails ....which would be unusual in many planning issues. There should be laws to prevent disturbance to avians.

And now, a serious message to fly-tippers .....we have often examined the piles of rubbish you leave by the roadside and we rarely find any flies or their larvae, no nits, no lice - in fact, no tasty morsels at all. So we shall no longer refer to fly-tipping for your anti-social habit. It is henceforth more accurately, rubbish dumping. Are you quite unaware that there is a proper council tip a short way up the A228 or are you so idle that you can't book a slot to use it? Sofas, old tiles, broken hand basins have no place in our lovely countryside. Unless you are going to empty a sack of peanuts beside the lanes, use your brains to find other ways to get rid of your unwanted stuff.

So far the weather has been mild, with none of that white stuff. Long may it continue! Coo coo.

#### Spring Celebration for Children and Adults

St John's Church Halling  
 Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 10.30 – 12.00  
 Spring Crafts for Mothering Sunday

All children welcome with parents or other cares. All free. Story, Songs, Prayer, Activities, Refreshments.

### World Day of Prayer – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March – 10.00 am

World Day of Prayer will be at St. John's Church, Halling on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 10.00 am. The theme of World Day of Prayer this year is "I know the plans I have for you" and is on our home ground of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is quite apt as this year we are celebrating our Queen's "Platinum Jubilee" of 70 years on the throne. This World Day of Prayer service is open to everyone and we have people from our local churches taking part. It is wonderful to think that this service is happening all over the world. Refreshments will be served afterwards including Victoria Sponge cake! See you there. Jenny.

### Church Army



Michael Cooper of the Church Army came to speak to us at both our services on 6<sup>th</sup> February, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Accession of Her Majesty the Queen. It was something of a homecoming for Michael as he has lived both at Cuxton and Holborough and was christened in Halling Church. Michael spoke about the great work the Church Army is doing to share the Gospel and to help people in the direst need. They work with the homeless providing food, clothing, shelter and companionship, which is itself very important. We heard how it made the day of a homeless man in Chatham, not only to be given warm clothing, but designer labels owing to the generosity of donors. We were also told about a young man in SE London who had grown up without a father and with a drug addicted mother who had learned to steal to feed himself. He spent years in prison, but it was the consistent kindness and compassion of a Church Army officer who stuck with him that enabled him to turn his life around and he is now helping others whose early experiences are similar to his own. You can find out more about the Church Army on the website – prayer requests and other ways in which you can help, including donations. Gillian Feraday is our parish CA representative. You might rather speak to her than try to do things online. We should be getting the magazines and prayer diaries again soon. Gillian could also supply you with a collecting box for the Church Army to have in your own home. Gillian can also advise on donating to the Church Army by bank transfer. There is also a CA Lent Course which you could access via their website **InTouch | Your Lent Resource from Church Army** or contact them on <[comms@churcharmy.org](mailto:comms@churcharmy.org)>

### Tommy's Talking Points

We still haven't been anywhere out of the parish, but we get out every day in our local countryside. It's been strange weather. Till January, it never got really cold and summer flowers like dead nettles in the hedgerows and geraniums in the garden were still producing blooms and spring flowers were already putting in an appearance – a beautiful bed of snowdrops in St Michael's churchyard, primroses in various places and the odd bud on the daffodils. Then sharp frosts came and appeared to do for the geraniums. But also some very mild days on which it was considerably warmer outside than in church. On 29<sup>th</sup> January, the day before my birthday, we actually sat in the sun in the garden for a bit while Master finished his paper. I pestered him to let me out again while dinner was cooking. It was very pleasant lying in the sun, but, when I barked and ran off after another dog, he made me come in. He's no fun.

The book he recommended last month was very good – *It's a Dog's Life* by Norah Bone. My turn to suggest some bedtime reading. My choice this month is *Military Humour* by Major Laugh.

One consequence of all this mild weather is that the grass keeps on growing. Master was told at school that it will do so so long as the temperature is above 50F (10C in new money). So it will soon need mowing again. Last year, he made very heavy weather of cutting the grass. It's all been roughed up by the badgers and moles, but he couldn't raise the blade to give more clearance. There was something wrong with the mechanism. So he asked a highly skilled engineering friend if he could do anything. I had a lovely morning being made a fuss of and watching him at work. The idea was to cannibalise this mower's twin whereof the engine is defunct. It turned out that someone had already had the mower with the functioning engine apart. It had been put back together wrong and couldn't possibly work. There was even a piece put in from a different kind of mower altogether. Another visit, more tools, offer of 10lb hammer declines. Still not right. Third visit anticipated so we can have grass cut for the **Easter Egg Hunt** on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Tommy.

A vibrant spring-themed poster. At the top, green ivy leaves frame the title. The title 'Spring Celebration' is written in a large, stylized font, with 'Spring' in red and 'Celebration' in green. Below the title, the text 'for Children & Parents' is in red. 'St. John's Church Halling' is in purple. A wooden signpost on the left displays the date and time in white and purple text. To the right, 'Spring Crafts for Mothering Sunday' is in green. The bottom of the poster is decorated with a variety of colorful flowers, including pink, blue, and yellow blooms, and a small butterfly is shown flying near the signpost.

# Spring Celebration

for Children & Parents

St. John's Church Halling

Saturday  
19th MARCH  
10.30am -12.00

Spring Crafts for  
Mothering Sunday